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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4919
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 2376
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 3033
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 3146
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1575
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2409
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 2778
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 3194
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 5639
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2326
RUZEHAA/CDR USEUCOM INTEL VAIHINGEN GE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000752

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR M. GAVIN
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR L.DOBBS AND E.LOKEN
STATE PASS TO DOL FOR S. HALEY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [EAID](#) [ELAB](#) [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: ZANU-PF YOUTH BEAT TEACHER FOR FAILING TO STRIKE

SUMMARY

¶1. (U) On September 11, ZANU-PF youth beat up an elementary school teacher in a rural area in eastern Zimbabwe for not going on strike with the historically ZANU-PF-aligned Zimbabwe Teachers' Association (ZIMTA) union. The aggressors had warned the teacher that he should stop teaching "until Tsvangirai removes sanctions." According to the rival Progressive Teachers' Union (PTUZ), headmasters in some areas have locked their doors in order to prevent teachers from reaching their classrooms. This appears to be an attempt by ZIMTA and ZANU-PF to undermine progress the inclusive government has made in re-opening schools that were shuttered throughout most of 2008.
END SUMMARY.

Teacher beaten by ZANU-PF Youth

¶2. (U) On September 11, Duncan Mapasure, a teacher at Mtasa Primary School in Mtasa district, Manicaland, was beaten by ZANU-PF youth militia members outside his classroom. PTUZ Secretary General Raymond Majongwe confirmed the incident. Mapasure was severely assaulted for failing to heed the call by ZIMTA to embark on a strike action in which the ZANU-PF backed union is calling for a salary of at least USD 540 per month. Mr Mapasure sustained serious head injuries and a broken right hand.

¶3. (U) Mapasure told the press, "I was attending classes on Thursday when they came in a white Mahindra and demanded that all teachers should stop teaching and stay home until Tsvangirai removes sanctions. All teachers then left as the situation was tense. The following day I went to school to give my pupils a test and it was

while I was invigilating that test that they came and pulled me outside the classroom and took turns beating me up accusing me of being a sellout and a puppet of the West."

Teachers Threatened, Locked Out Elsewhere

¶4. (U) Majongwe told us that Mapasure is the only teacher who has been physically assaulted for not joining the ZIMTA strike, but in other areas teachers have been threatened by ZANU-PF youth. In Mashonaland East, teachers have been threatened and ordered to leave. In Murehwa, the orders were given by menacing ZANU-PF youth; to the north in Rushinga, a war vet known as Kasoro ordered teachers out of school. Majongwe also reported that some headmasters in schools near Bulawayo have locked the school premises in order to force teachers to follow the ZIMTA-led strike. Majongwe, who has a good working relationship with Education Minister David Coltart (MDC-M), told us he gave Coltart the list of closed schools in Bulawayo earlier this week. Unfortunately, Coltart is hamstrung by QBulawayo earlier this week. Unfortunately, Coltart is hamstrung by the longtime civil servants who work for him, including his deputy minister, permanent secretary and regional education officers, who drag their feet in implementing his policies.

¶5. (SBU) According to Majongwe, these ZANU-PF aligned civil servants have influenced ZIMTA to undermine the progress MDC has made in the last year -- principally in re-opening schools and hospitals. Although ZIMTA has called on teachers to strike for a higher salary, PTUZ has only called on teachers to strike for two days per week. Majongwe says that one year was already lost in 2008, and neither

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teachers nor students stand to gain by losing another year through an extended strike. PTUZ is encouraging teachers to ensure students are prepared to write their end-of-year national exams, without which they cannot advance to the next level of schooling, and promises to postpone various industrial actions until the new 2010 academic year. Some teachers, still anxious for salaries above the current standard of USD 150 per month, are angry that PTUZ has not called for a strike, but Majongwe and the PTUZ leadership remain steadfast in their desire to keep teachers in school to finish the current academic year.

American Union Seeks to Bridge Gap

¶6. (SBU) This weekend representatives of the executive committees of PTUZ and ZIMTA will convene in South Africa at a retreat organized by the American Federation of Teachers in an effort to bridge the growing gap between the two unions. Although the unions were historically rivals, earlier this year they united in their efforts to garner higher teacher wages. In recent months however, the tensions have increased dramatically between the two, and Majongwe told us he has stopped speaking to the leaders of ZIMTA.

Donors Helping Revive Education

¶7. (U) In recent weeks, the government has made some progress in improving public education. Significantly on Monday, Coltart, UNICEF, and Western donors launched a major initiative, the Education Transition Fund (ETF), which will bring a significant number of school books to primary schools across Zimbabwe while also funding school fees for orphans and vulnerable children. So far Western donors have pledged USD 70 million to UNICEF for the Fund. This new funding, which is not being routed through the government, marks a major international donation that will help the people of Zimbabwe in a tangible way visible in rural communities. (COMMENT: While the ETF is an important commitment to education, major investments in personnel and infrastructure will be necessary to begin to return Zimbabwean education to the high standard it once enjoyed. END COMMENT.)

COMMENT

18. (SBU) Education under Minister Coltart has been a bright spot for the new government. Many in ZANU-PF want the inclusive government to fail, and undermining education may be an attempt to achieve that goal. END COMMENT.

PETTERSON